



United States Department of State

Washington, D.C. 20520

OCT 24 2012

Dear Mr. Cassidy:

Thank you for your letter of October 1 regarding the events of September 11 in Benghazi. We appreciate that you and your colleagues are deeply interested in understanding the events surrounding the attacks in Benghazi and that you are looking for ways to prevent such attacks from happening again. We share this commitment. Nobody will hold this Department more accountable than we hold ourselves; we served with Chris Stevens, Sean Smith, Glen Doherty, and Tyrone Woods.

As you may know, the Secretary has established an Accountability Review Board (ARB) chaired by Ambassador Thomas Pickering to fully investigate the events in Benghazi. The ARB has already begun its work and is charged with answering many of the questions you raise in your letter, including whether our security systems and procedures in Benghazi were adequate, whether those systems and procedures were properly implemented, and any lessons that may be relevant to our work around the world. We encourage you to withhold any final conclusions about the Benghazi attack until the ARB completes its review.

In the meantime, we have undertaken individual post reviews, as well as a world-wide review of our security posture, to assess and put in place measures to further secure our people and facilities. In the Middle East, where a number of our posts faced unrest, we worked with host nations to increase security personnel, drew down Embassy staff, and made other post-specific adjustments as warranted by the threat environment.

Our diplomats work in more than 275 posts all over the world, many of them dangerous. This is the reality of diplomacy today. It is often in these very places that we have the most at stake. We deeply value the lives of our colleagues and respect enormously the work they do every day to further America's interests. We will continue to take steps to ensure we both protect our people and remain engaged wherever our interests are at stake.

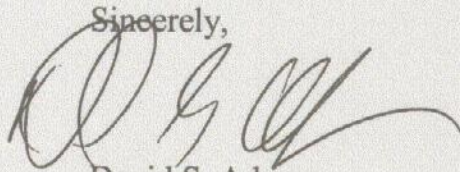
The Honorable
Bill Cassidy,
House of Representatives.

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Together with the Congress we must ensure that all those who serve the United States overseas have the best protection we can provide as they pursue our interests all over the world, especially in places where that work is most difficult.

We hope you find this information useful. Please do not hesitate to contact us should you have further questions or concerns.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read 'D S Adams', with a large, stylized initial 'D' and a long, sweeping horizontal stroke at the end.

David S. Adams
Assistant Secretary
Legislative Affairs